4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1



585 her head three times in token of farewell to the places she will never again, as a maiden, behold.[1] When her approach is announced to the women of her husband's family, they sing:

[539]

"Bride, lost bride, what wouldst thou find?"
"The courtyard gate of my bridegroom kind."
"What, O bride, wilt thou give to me
If I show now his courtyard gate unto thee?"
"Shirts, O my bridegroom, all broidered and fine."
"Small is thy guerdon, O brideling of mine,
For I can take them, nor ask leave of thine."

Arrived at the bridegroom's home, the same precautions are taken in dismounting the bride as were observed in placing her upon her horse. The women of the house come down to receive her, and pushing her gently, lead her, as if against her will, into the nuptial chamber, where she is seated on cushions. When coffee has been served and partaken of, the bride's friends take their leave, the eldest among them saying in a loud voice:

"Until now she belonged to God and to us, now and henceforward she belongs to you and to God, who will protect her."[2]

As they retire, the last message of the bride to her mother is sung:

[539]

Stay, stay, O dearest brothers, stay!
A word to you the bride would say.
Stay, stay, O dearest brothers, stay!

[1] This observance may possibly have its origin in the propitiatory farewells paid by a bride, among the ancient Slavs, to her father's household gods. Compare Kovalevsky, *Modern Customs, &c., of Russia*, pp. 33–4.

[606]

[2] This is intended to signify that if the bride is not well treated in her new home her parents will intervene on her behalf.

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682 as suicide so that he escaped with his life, and that was the com-
627 monest result, he was treated as 'a low-class fellow', visited by
593 none but bad characters, and, if a Mohammedan, never given the greeting 'Peace be with thee'. In Mirditë, always more rigorous than other districts, he was considered so anti-social that he was either killed or expelled in perpetuity by his kinsmen, or, according to another version, by the whole village along with his kinsmen.

606 The murder of certain relatives did not concern the family. Thus,
628 if a man murdered a relative by marriage, such as his son-in-law, father-in-law, wife's brother, or sister's husband, the crime ranked as an ordinary murder and was expiated with a life or with blood money. The marriage tie was disregarded; the important point was that, unlike two brothers living under separate roofs, murderer and
[581] victim belonged to different families. Such murders were very rare, for marriage relationships were always contracted to secure a valued friend, and no Albanian in his senses ever threw a friend lightly away. Again, if a man murdered his maternal uncle or his sister's son, murderer and victim belonged to different families, and blood money at least was payable for the crime. The contingency rarely arose, since a maternal uncle was regarded as a father and a sister's son as one's own child.

628 If a woman was taken in adultery, and her husband killed her and
831 her paramour together—'kerchief and cap together'—he incurred
681 no feud; their deaths went unavenged; it was a case of 'blood for
593 blood', one equal to the other. To prove them guilty he sent for his wife's brother and her lover's brother to see them both lying dead; his message would run, 'I killed her because I caught her sinning'. The wife's brother would hand him a cartridge, saying, 'Here is a cartridge for my sister. Bravo for doing this'. The paramour's nearest relatives came to the house, drank coffee, and took away the corpse; the murderer accompanied them to their house, drank coffee, and so peace was established between them. If the paramour's brother was 'a gentleman', 'a man', he would give a cartridge to the husband, saying, 'I pardon your crime because my brother has sinned'. Even the father of the paramour might say to the murderer, 'A blessing on your rifle', and give him coffee as a sign that there was peace between them. In modern times the government accepted the evidence of the two bodies lying together and punished the husband with no more than two or three weeks' imprisonment.

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[607] had killed her out of ill-will. After her brother had killed a male 628 from his house, the husband would kill both her brother and her 684 lover; then peace would be made between all three families. In 593 Martanesh and Lumë if the husband did not kill the lover as well, the wife's brother, when threatening vengeance, would say, 'You killed the bitch; why didn't you kill the dog also?'

[606] Sometimes a husband had not the courage or the heart to kill his wife; then perhaps his people killed her. Or perhaps he sent word to her father that he had found her sinning and asked him to kill her. But the father generally replied to such husbands, 'Kill her yourself, because I gave her to you to look after'. If the wife suspected this interchange of messages, she might run away to her father. In that case her husband sent him word saying, 'Either kill that bitch or see me destroy you root and branch'. The father then either killed her or sent her to her husband to kill. If the father protected the wife, a blood feud began between him and the husband, for the latter could not bear the world to think that he had swallowed such a disgrace.

In Martanesh, it should be noted, it was permissible, as it was not elsewhere, to kill the lover and the wife separately, if they could not be found together. This seems to have been the case in Dibër also. About 1916 a man in Vleshjë (Dibër) found his wife unfaithful and killed the lover. The wife ran away, but the husband caught her, poured paraffin on her, and burned her alive, yet seems to have escaped her brother's vengeance.

684 If the outraged husband killed only the lover, then he had to fear 682 vengeance from the lover's family. In Lumë on the principle that 628 'vengeance is not abandoned because of guilt', vengeance was sometimes taken by a 'bad' brother for a man killed in adultery. He might kill the husband, forgive him, or demand blood money.

716 A gruesome story of collective punishment of a guilty pair comes 684 from Martanesh. About 1912 a young man was caught with a 627 young wife. The 'circle' of the young man took him and the 'circle' of the wife took her out to an appointed spot where they stood them up together. The youth's uncle shot him dead, and the girl's brother shot her, while the drums beat and the other men danced. The honour of the two families being thus cleared, they buried the two close together, but in separate graves, at cross-roads; no hoxha was present to commit them to the grave, nor were they washed and changed. In the neighbouring Zdrâjshë also a guilty

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couple were buried in any sort of hole, but in separate graves without a hoxha or being washed on boards and changed. In Lumë other customs prevailed. Both were buried in the cemetery in the ordinary way, unless they had been caught outside in some wood or thicket, in which case they were buried where they were killed.

Public opinion is growing against such double murders. It was too often the custom to give young girls to old men, with the inevitable result that the young wives were apt to fall in love with men more of their own age and had therefore to be killed by their fathers.

At Zdrâjshë, when a bride was found on marriage to be pregnant by another man, the unusually mild divorced her at once, but the general rule was to have her killed. The groom locked up the bride, sent for her father, and bade him find her lover. The father always asked for three or four days' respite during which he made inquiries. If the bride had indeed done wrong, an honest father sought out and killed the lover and then came to shoot his own daughter. Or perhaps he gave the bridegroom a cartridge and bade him shoot her with it. All the principles involved are well illustrated by a story from Lurë, still the most undisciplined of all Albanian tribes. About 1928 Metë Hoti, having taken a bride from Vehib Runa in Gur, found her within three months of bearing a child by another man. He sent her back to her father, bidding him find the lover and kill them both. The father would not kill his daughter and persisted in his refusal in spite of Metë's threats to kill the whole family if he did not do so. The father's kinsmen supported Metë, and when he came one night and killed the father, mother, daughter and infant and four other people in the house, they refused to avenge these deaths because the father had transgressed against the unwritten law. For the same reason the government merely imprisoned Metë for a few months.

A woman might be killed for various reasons by a man in her husband's or her father's family. For example, her husband or his representative had leave to kill her for heinous crimes like adultery, incorrigible pilfering, or murdering one of his relatives, but if they killed her for any other reason, her father killed one of them. Two principles were involved: one, that a man bought only the services of his wife and not her life; the other, that a woman retained till her dying day her right to protection by her father's family. Her son by the murderer could not avenge her, because killing his

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582 lost because the only possible avenger was the woman's husband,
562 who was not likely to kill the wife, who had cost him good money, for
628 the sake of his sister, though he was more likely to do so for the sake
596 of his father or brother. If she murdered a married woman of her
[607] own kin, her victim's husband exacted blood money from the males of her family or perhaps another girl. If she murdered a married woman in her husband's kin, his brother's wife, for example, or her own brother's wife, her victim's brother exacted blood money or even a life from the males in her family.

When a woman killed the wife of her husband's brother, her victim's husband had to suffer the loss of his chattel in silence. He could not kill the murderess because a man might not kill his brother's wife for any reason other than adultery or thieving. Nor could he kill her husband because a man might not kill his own brother. In his default his wife was avenged by her brother, who might kill either him or his brother if they were not separated, but only him if they were. Whatever the issue, her sex saved the murderess from expiating her crime.

● [606] When a woman killed her mother-in-law or her daughter-in-law, her sex again saved her from expiating the crime. Her victim's brother was the only possible avenger, for no member of her husband's family could kill the murderess for anything except adultery and thieving. The avenger could kill any male in the family of the murderess; the marriage relationship did not count.